

Mr. Speaker, please join me in voting in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 266, expressing the sense of Congress regarding the benefits of music education.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, growing up along the United States/Mexico border, music has always had a profound influence on my life. Music, like art, dance, and drama are windows through which we view culture. Music is a language that is understood by diverse people across the world and ties us together in our common humanity. With much of the strife and civil unrest that takes place in our world, music is one of those gifts that helps bridge cultural, social, and political gaps between people.

In our schools, I truly believe that music education enhances intellectual development and enriches the academic environment for children of all ages. I think that an investment in music education is an investment in the health and well-being of our society. Music education gives our children the opportunity to explore and experience something that has deep meaning and significance to all of us. This is critically important and should not be taken lightly.

The notes and scales in the musical scores are the threads that help us build and maintain the tapestry of culture. We all gain value through music, and we, as the 106th Congress, should support music education as an integral part of our educational curriculum. I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 266, expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the benefits of music education.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MCINTOSH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 266.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 2330

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

RECOGNIZING AWARD OF MEDAL OF HONOR TO PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a great man, a man of immense stature to the history of this Nation, a strong, moral

family man and a visionary conservationist, a man who distinguished himself in peace and in war and who would at the age of 43 become the first great American voice of the 20th century and our 26th President, Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.

My esteemed colleague the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) initially brought this case to my attention in 1997. As chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services' Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I worked with the gentleman from New York and former Pennsylvania Representative Paul McHale, the Roosevelt family, representatives of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, authors and historians to correct a historical oversight. Our crusade has been to see that then Colonel Teddy Roosevelt be awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for conspicuous gallantry at the Battle of San Juan Heights during the Spanish American War.

On July 1st of 1898, Colonel Roosevelt led the First United States Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, the Rough Riders, into action alongside Army regulars at San Juan Heights outside Santiago, Cuba. During the battle, the Rough Riders encountered a regular Army unit that was reluctant to press the attack. Roosevelt boomed, "Step aside and let my men through," then proceeded to lead his men through a hail of enemy gunfire during the assault up Kettle Hill, one of two hills comprising San Juan Heights. His leadership was so compelling that many of the regular Army officers and men fell in line with the Rough Riders.

Mr. Speaker, Colonel Roosevelt's heroic performance on that day is well documented, but I believe it is enlightening to review some of the historical details:

Number one. Roosevelt's actions demonstrated an utter disregard for his own safety and were consistent with the actions of those that were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Spanish American war. Of the 22 officers and soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor that day, 21 received it because they gave up cover and exposed themselves to enemy fire. Once the order to attack was received, Colonel Roosevelt mounted his horse and rode up and down the ranks in full view of enemy gunners. During the final assault on Kettle Hill, he remained on horseback, exposing him to the withering fire of the enemy. If voluntary exposure to enemy fire was the criteria for award of the Medal, then Colonel Roosevelt clearly exceeds the standard.

By driving his Rough Riders through the ranks of a stalled regular Army unit to pursue the attack on Kettle Hill, Colonel Roosevelt changed the course of the battle. This is what a decoration for heroism is all about, the raw courage to make decisions and put your life in jeopardy to win the battle.

His decisive leadership in pressing the attack saved American lives and brought the battle to a successful conclusion.

The extraordinary nature of Colonel Roosevelt's bravery was confirmed by two Medal of Honor awardees who recommended him for the Medal of Honor on that day: Major General William Shafter and Colonel Leonard Wood, original commander of the Rough Riders and later military governor of Cuba. Both men were eminently qualified to judge whether Roosevelt's actions qualified him for the award. The Army thought so much of these two men that they named forts after them.

Yet despite the preponderance of evidence and the endorsement by these two Medal of Honor awardees, the War Department never acted upon their recommendation. I believe there is credible evidence that politics, not an honest assessment of Colonel Roosevelt's valor, was the prime reason the recommendation for the Medal of Honor was never approved. The McKinley administration's fear of a yellow fever epidemic prompted them to delay the troop's return from the war, a decision that Roosevelt publicly criticized. Seeking to quickly defuse the issue, the McKinley administration reversed course and brought the troops home. The then Secretary of War, Russell Alger, resented the public embarrassment that he received as a result of the criticism from the hero of San Juan Heights, Teddy Roosevelt. Lacking records to substantiate why the decoration was disapproved at the time, I believe that Secretary Alger had the opportunity and motivation to deny Teddy Roosevelt the Medal of Honor by simply just not acting on it.

Mr. Speaker, the Medal of Honor is this Nation's highest military award for bravery in combat. Since 1863, more than 3,400 extraordinary Americans have been awarded the Medal of Honor by the President in the name of the Congress. President Theodore Roosevelt's name would be an honorable and noteworthy addition to this most hallowed of lists. His raw courage and the fearless, bold decisiveness that he demonstrated while leading his Rough Riders up Kettle Hill on horseback altered the course of the battle, saved American lives and epitomized the selfless service of all Medal of Honor awardees.

On February 22, Secretary of Defense William Cohen forwarded a memorandum to President Clinton recommending that Theodore Roosevelt be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. I join the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) and former Representative Paul McHale in commending the Department of Defense for following the lead of Congress by choosing to acknowledge President Roosevelt's heroic leadership and courage under fire during the Spanish